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What's The Purpose?

WE BELIEVE the time has come to question the motives of the editors of the anti-CIA periodical Counterspy as well as others who appear bent on the destruction of the nation's intelligence gathering organizations.

In an appearance this week at the Franklin Street branch of the YWCA, editors Winslow Peck and Tim Butz of Counterspy openly admitted that they confirmed some of the names of CIA agents for the leftist newspaper, Liberation, in Paris. Liberation printed the names of 50 American agents last week.

Peck further said that his organization asked Liberation "not to print the names of those we did not believe were CIA agents." That raises the question of why Peck thought it all right to print the names of those men and women he believed to be genuine CIA agents operating in France.

Although Peck admitted that the basic purpose of Counterspy is abolishment of the CIA and its "outlaw spirit," we wonder if his group's real objective isn't to eliminate all of the nation's intelligence gathering organizations.

Otherwise, why would he cite that Counterspy is also concerned with the intelligence gathering activities of other agencies, including the National Security Agency and the FBI.

Butz noted that the publication is also looking into the activities of police SWAT teams, which he characterized as "military police."

We believe Butz and Peck, who, by their own admissions, are experts on analyzing the international security scene, would have provided a more important service to their country and the public by discussing the operations of the KGB in the United States or the Moscow-directed activities of the National Labor Party, an organization not to be confused with the activities of any legitimate labor organization.

It would be folly, of course, to deny that the CIA as well as other agencies are free of mistakes, some of them bizarre and pathetic. But intelligence gathering, even with its mistakes, is a necessary part of government — any government.

And it would be remiss if we didn't point out that the Americans who serve the CIA are involved in intelligence gathering activities because they think our nation is still the best in the world and offers the greatest hope to the hundreds of millions of oppressed people living under Communist and leftist dictatorships.

It is time more of us spoke up against the purposes, if not the activities, of the Winslow Peak and Tim Butz types while there is still time.